

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 2477

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SEDU PFOR IS EG OEXC
SUBJECT: HARVARD'S INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON EDUCATION IN THE
NEAR EAST

REF: (A) CAIRO 2130, (B) TEL AVIV 759

1. IN SEPARATE DISCUSSIONS WITH DR. SALAH KUTUB AND DR. ABDUL
HADI AFIFI, PARTICIPANTS IN DECEMBER HARVARD CONFERENCE, USIS
OFFICERS LEARNED FOLLOWING ON EGYPTIAN VIEW OF PROJECT.

2. EGYPTIAN PARTICIPANTS VERY PLEASED WITH HARVARD SESSIONS
AND WAY HARVARD ORGANIZERS HAD HANDLED DELICATE QUESTION OF
PRESENCE OF ISRAELIS WITH EGYPTIANS. KUTUB SAID HE HAD EXPLAINED
TO HARVARD ORGANIZERS THE EGYPTIAN DESIRE KEEP IT STRICTLY
ACADEMIC, AVOID ANY POLITICAL OVERTONES AND THEREFORE AVOID ALL
PUBLICITY WHICH COULD GET BACK TO ARAB WORLD, CAUSING MIS-
UNDERSTANDINGS HERE. HARVARD PEOPLE FULLY UNDERSTOOD THIS AND
EVERYTHING WENT WELL DURING SESSIONS. EGYPTIANS LOOKED FORWARD
TO RETURNING IN JULY OR AUGUST WITH OTHERS IN 7-MEMBER DELEGATION
TO CONFERENCE. AFIFI AGREED HARVARD MEETINGS HAD GONE WELL,
BUT ADDED HE WAS SURE HARVARD HAD ULTERIOR MOTIVE ATTEMPTING
GET ISRAELIS AND EGYPTIANS TOGETHER, AND THAT PRESENCE OF TURKS
AND IRANIANS SIMPLY TO MASK THIS INTENT.

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3. AFTER HIS DELEGATION'S RETURN TO EGYPT, SAID KUTUB,
EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT RADIO MONITORS PICKED UP ISRAELI RADIO
BROADCAST REPORT OF STATEMENT BY ISRAELI PARTICIPANT ELIEZER
SHUMELI, WHO, KUTUB SAYS, CLAIMED TO HAVE PRIVATE CONTACTS
WITH EGYPTIANS IN WHICH BILATERAL ARRANGEMENTS OF SOME KIND
AGREED UPON. THIS IS INCORRECT, SAYS KUTUB, AND CLAIM CREATES

SERIOUS EMBARRASSMENT FOR EGYPTIAN DELEGATION WITH GOE AS WELL AS FOR GOE WITH OTHER ARAB STATES. KUTUB SAYS HE TOLD EDUCATION MINISTER HILMY THAT EGYPTIANS WOULD GIVE UP ALL FURTHER PARTICIPATION IN PROJECT IF GOE WISHES THEM TO BECAUSE OF POLITICAL EMBARRASSMENT. HILMY SAID GOE WOULD NOT DECIDE THAT NOW BUT WAIT TO SEE HOW MIDDLE EAST SITUATION DEVELOPED DURING NEXT FEW MONTHS. IF GENEVA CONFERENCE HELD AND EVERYTHING SEEMED TO BE GOING WELL, EGYPTIANS COULD PROBABLY ATTEND.

4. KUTUB AND AFIFI RECENTLY MET EGYPTIAN WHO WAS ON HIS WAY TO HARVARD ON OTHER BUSINESS. THEY TOLD HIM ABOVE STORY AND ASKED HIM TO CONVEY EGYPTIAN VIEWS INFORMALLY TO HARVARD PROJECT OFFICIALS IF HE SAW OPPORTUNITY. KUTUB AND AFIFI SEEM SINCERELY INTERESTED IN MOVING AHEAD WITH IT BUT EQUALLY SINCERELY SYMPATHETIC WITH GOE EMBARRASSMENT AT ANY PUBLICITY RESULTING FROM IT.
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